

## AN ADDITION TO NORTH AMERICAN PETRELS.

BY WILLIAM PALMER.

THE great storm that occurred on the coast of the South Atlantic States on August 26-27, 1893, resulted in a great destruction of seabird life, besides driving many individuals far inland. At such times specimens are likely to be obtained that are rare or unusual in certain localities, and occasionally one that is considerably out of its normal range; this storm was no exception in this respect.<sup>1</sup>

Two Petrels were received by me at that time, both having been taken within the limits of the city of Washington. Both specimens prove to be typical of Knudsen's Petrel, *Oceanodroma cryptoleucura* Ridgway, probably a Pacific Ocean species. This bird was described in 1882<sup>2</sup> from some specimens which had been in the National Museum collection since 1866. These were collected on or about some of the Hawaiian Islands (Waimea and Kanai) by Valdemar Knudsen, sometime previous to that year, no dates being on the labels. Mr. C. H. Townsend of the U. S. F. C. S. 'Albatross' collected four specimens near Wenman Island, of the Galapagos Group, on April 4, 1891, which are also in the National Collection. There are a number of specimens in the British Museum from several localities in the Hawaiian Islands, from Australia, and from various islands in the eastern Atlantic, — Funchal, Madeira; Desertas Islands, Porto Santo Island, St. Helena and Great Salvage Island. A specimen was also picked up December 5, 1895, on the coast of Kent, England. Thus a fairly cosmopolitan range seems imminent for the bird. The species bears a very great general resemblance to Leach's Petrel but differs in so many features as to be clearly distinguishable. In the following descriptions I have italicized these differences.

*Oceanodroma leucorhoa.* LEACH'S PETREL.

General color, sooty brown, nearly unicolor, but slightly paler beneath. Tail *strongly* forking; upper tail-coverts *dingy* white, some (under)

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<sup>1</sup> Auk, 1893, 361; 1894, 85, 181.<sup>2</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., IV, 1882, 337.

feathers almost entirely brown; all *irregularly* tipped with the dark body color, and *all* having *brown shafts*. Rectrices entirely brown, paler at base, and sometimes having (except central pair) the base white for a short distance. Outer toes slightly shorter than the middle. Toe nails long and narrowish.

**Oceanodroma cryptoleucura. KNUDSEN'S PETREL.**

Similar to *O. leucorhoa* in size, color and marking, but with *slightly* forking tail. Upper tail-coverts *pure* white, the longer feathers *broadly* and *somewhat evenly* tipped with the dark body color; all having the shafts *white*. Rectrices (except central pair) *white* at base for *fully an inch* and *extending further* along outer webs of the outer pair. Outer toes *decidedly* shorter than the middle. Toe-nails *shorter* and *broad*er.

*Measurements, from Ridgway's Manual.*

	Wing.	Tail.	Forking.	Tarsi.
<i>O. leucorhoa</i>	6.00-6.30	3.50-4.00	.80-.90	.90-.95
<i>O. cryptoleucura</i>	5.80-6.30	3.00-3.15	.20-.30	.85-.90

*Measurements of the Washington Specimens.*

3233 ♀ W. P. Coll.	6.20	2.94	.12	.90
3234 ♀ "	6.00	2.85	.15	.90

Length of No. 3234, 7.75; extent, 19.10.

The greater amount of white at the base of the tail-feathers, the broad dark tips of the upper tail-coverts, and the slightly forked tail will readily serve to identify this species. The Hawaiian Islands, Galapagos and Washington birds agree well in these characters.

Both my specimens are molting and seem to be adults and are both females. In both the bulk of the feathers have been changed except on the neck and throat. The wings in both have been entirely renewed, the outer pair of feathers in each showing remains of the sheaths at their bases. In one, No. 3234, the tail has been entirely renewed, no remains of the sheaths showing; while in the other but nine feathers are full grown, the next to the outer pairs being rather more than two thirds their full length, and the fourth on the right side is nearly half grown. Some of the upper tail-coverts lack their full growth on both.

The capture of one of these specimens came about in a rather peculiar way for a Petrel. The first was received from a boy who

had shot it on August 28, while it was flying over the Anacostia River, near the Navy Yard Bridge, with several others. The other I received the next day from a friend who had obtained it from a lady who had secured it in the following decidedly novel manner. Their house on Capitol Hill, in Washington, has a gable roof with a small round window facing the east. During the early progress of the storm it was remembered that this window was open and one of the family went upstairs to close it. This bird was found fluttering in the room, evidently having entered through the window. It was secured and efforts made to feed it, but two days later it died, and then came into my hands. On receipt of the first specimen, as a Petrel is decidedly a rare acquisition for Washington, I went to show it to Mr. Ridgway, as we usually do when receiving rarities, but unfortunately he was absent. The almost even tail was noticed, but as new feathers were found and no specimens of *leucorhoa* were available, it was concluded that molting was the cause of the shortness. Upon receiving the second specimen and noting no difference between the two I concluded they were the same. I had no specimens of Leach's then with which to compare, and of course never dreamed that a Sandwich Islands species, unknown to North America, could by any possibility be in my possession. Recently having to compare some Alaskan Petrels I noticed disagreements and accordingly submitted them to the inspection of Mr. Ridgway, who at once recognized his own species and expressed astonishment at seeing it under such circumstances. Thus a most unexpected species is added to our local list and at the same time also to North America. It is truly a wanderer of whose home nothing is known. Other specimens may exist in collections, though, like these, under another name. No. 3234 is now No. 154436 of the U. S. National Museum catalogue.